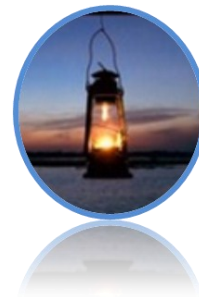


# ACS BRIEF

American Citizen Services Newsletter

May 2014



## From the Ambassador



**Ambassador  
Dan W. Mozena**

I have been asked to compose a few words regarding the launch of this newsletter, and I am pleased to do so.

"The United States government has no higher responsibility than to serve and protect its citizens, including those who reside or are temporarily abroad." This is the mission of the U.S. Department of State. And it holds true. That's why we build embassies. That's why this Embassy stands here in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

There are few places on this earth where a person can go without finding citizens of the United States of America. They go abroad for many reasons. But ultimately, they go abroad to look, to see, to understand and experience the broader world. They go to new places, and they invest their money, they invest themselves. They build friendships. They build bridges between the United States and the many places they go.

And the Americans in Bangladesh are no exception.

Whether you are here in Bangladesh on a short holiday, visiting family and friends, working at a non-governmental organization or developing new business, rest

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*"The United States government has no higher responsibility than to serve and protect its citizens, including those who reside or are temporarily abroad."*

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**Rickshaw Procession by Consul General, Jamie Fouss**

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assured that you too are helping to forge an ever stronger partnership between Bangladesh and the United States.

The Embassy supports your presence here. We are here to help in those ways that we can, and our American Citizen Services unit remains your first point of contact with the Embassy. The staff are eager to assist, and this newsletter is meant to be yet another format for engaging you, our American citizens.

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) is a free service to allow U.S. citizens and nationals traveling abroad to enroll their trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. If you and your family are not already enrolled, please visit the [website](https://step.state.gov) to learn more.



Learn more at [step.state.gov](https://step.state.gov)

## From the Consul General



**Consul General  
Jamie Fouss**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the U.S. Embassy–Dhaka's American Citizen Services (ACS) newsletter. We hope the newsletter will provide the American community living in Bangladesh with useful information on U.S. citizen outreach events, changes to regulations, embassy closures, and tips for living in Bangladesh or for traveling abroad. Sad to say, but this will be my first and last note in the newsletter. After three years of living in Bangladesh, I will depart Dhaka in July for my next assignment in India. My family and I will take away so many wonderful memories of our experience living and working here.

I'd like to highlight some recent improvements we've made to ACS services. In light of the political turmoil that Bangladesh suffered through last year, we started using SMS message services to alert U.S. citizens to any planned or fast-moving demonstration. We also use SMS text messaging to inform beneficiaries that their checks have arrived. We have been proactive in increasing outreach and services to U.S. citizens, holding such events in, Chittagong, Sylhet, and Dhaka.

You should know that the Consular Section is now entering our annual busy season when many people want to visit the U.S. or students apply for visas to study. Demand for nonimmigrant visas has grown fivefold in the last year, so we've had to adjust our schedules to meet the demand, moving ACS customer hours into the afternoon. Our new online appointment system allows us to manage our caseload better.

## Changes in ACS

There have been some changes to our procedures in the past few months, and we'd like to take this opportunity to remind everyone of these changes and to explain why we've done this.

First, all of our regular services now require an appointment. In the past we could accommodate walk-ins, but the Consular Section has experienced so much growth in the past year, that we have lost that flexibility. To make sure we have the ability to address American citizen requests, we now require that you schedule an appointment. Visit our [ACS Online Calendar](#) to do so.

We are also now asking that for passport services and reports of birth abroad you apply using an online application. The online

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**Fishing Nets by Jamie Fouss**

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application helps us reduce clerical errors and automates our processing which in turn makes your visit for ACS Services quicker. You can access the appropriate online application by selecting the relevant service from the Embassy website and following the links.

You may have noticed that the lock box for storing personal phones and other items is no longer available. The lockbox was removed for security reasons. We apologize for any inconvenience, but please remember to make arrangements to leave your phone and other electronic items at home or outside the Embassy with a friend.

Finally, for picking up passports, reports of birth abroad, and federal benefits checks, pick up times are Sundays, Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 3:00–4:00 pm. No appointment is necessary.



Crossing the Bridge by Jamie Fouss

## Planning for Summer Holidays

Summer holidays are right around the corner. As you plan your ideal get-away, the first thing to check is not your bathing suit but the validity of your passport. Most neighboring countries require that you have six months of validity on your passport to grant your visa on arrival.

So wherever you are planning to go, check that [country's requirements](#) and check your passport expiration date.

Remember it typically takes about two weeks to renew your U.S. passport. Visas in your old passport will probably not be honored and most countries will expect you to get a new visa. You will need to plan time for that process too.



# Summary of Warden Messages

## IRS Guidance

Although U.S. citizens, resident aliens, and certain nonresident aliens may maintain foreign accounts for a variety of legitimate and practical reasons, the Foreign Bank and Financial Accounts Report (FBAR) is required because foreign financial institutions may not be subject to the same reporting requirements as domestic financial institutions. The FBAR is a tool to help the U.S. government identify persons who may be using foreign financial accounts to circumvent U.S. law. Investigators use FBARs to help identify or trace funds used for illicit purposes or to identify unreported income maintained or generated abroad. If an individual owns a foreign bank account, brokerage account, mutual fund, unit trust, or other financial account, then they might be required to report the account yearly to the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). To assist all taxpayers in meeting their foreign bank account reporting requirements, the IRS is hosting an [Internal Revenue Service Webinar on Reporting of Foreign Financial Accounts on the Electronic FBAR](#), on Wednesday, June 4, 2014. Details are below:

**Title:** Reporting of Foreign Financial Accounts on the Electronic FBAR  
**Date:** June 4, 2014  
**Time:** 2:00 pm (ET); 1:00 pm (CT); 12:00 pm (MT); 11:00 a.m. (PT)  
**Location:** Your Office or Home  
**Contact:** SB/SE Webinars; **Email:** [sbse.webinars@irs.gov](mailto:sbse.webinars@irs.gov)  
**Event Information:** This FREE one-hour broadcast is for:  
All Tax Professionals  
FBAR filers

Additional information for filers about the filing requirement is available on the IRS website: [IRS Reminds Those with Foreign Assets of U.S. Tax Obligations.](#)"

## Travel Alert for Thailand (May 23, 2014)

The U.S. Department of State recommends that U.S. citizens reconsider any nonessential travel to Thailand, particularly Bangkok, due to ongoing political and social unrest and restrictions on internal movements, including an indefinite nighttime curfew throughout Thailand. The Department of State has advised official U.S. government travelers to defer all non-essential travel to Thailand until further notice. This Travel Alert supersedes the Travel Alert issued on May 16, 2014, and will expire on August 21, 2014.

U.S. citizens who travel to Thailand are strongly advised to enroll in the State Department's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). U.S. citizens without Internet access may enroll directly with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. By enrolling, you make it easier for the U.S. embassy or consulate to contact you in case of an emergency. Unless otherwise indicated in a public announcement, the U.S. Embassy in Bangkok is open for all routine American Citizens Services by appointment. U.S. citizens needing emergency assistance do not need an appointment. The [American Citizen Services Unit](#) of the U.S. Embassy is located at 95 Wireless Road in Bangkok, and can be reached by calling 66-2-205-4049, or by emailing [acs@state.gov](mailto:acs@state.gov). The Embassy's after-hours emergency telephone number is 66-2-205-4000.

U.S. citizens should also consult the Department of State's [Country Specific Information for Thailand](#). Stay up to date by bookmarking our [Bureau of Consular Affairs website](#), which contains the current [Travel Warnings](#) and [Travel Alerts](#) as well as the [Worldwide Caution](#). Follow the State Department on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

## Earthquake Preparedness Tips

### Household and Family:

Talk with your family about potential disasters and why it's necessary to prepare for them. Involve each member of your family in the planning process. By showing them simple steps that can increase their safety, you can help reduce their anxiety about emergencies.

### Home Safety:

During a disaster, ordinary objects in your home can cause injury or damage. However, there are simple steps you can take to make your home safer. Start by viewing each room with a "disaster eye" and identify potential hazards – bookshelves that could tip over in an earthquake and block exits or heavy objects that could fall and cause injury.

### Food:

When a disaster occurs, you might not have access to food, water and electricity for days, or even weeks. Store enough emergency food to provide for your family for at least 3 days.

### Water:

In a disaster, water supplies may be cut off or contaminated. Store enough water for everyone in your family to last **for at least 3 days**. Store one gallon of water per person, per day. Three gallons per person per day will give you enough to drink and for limited cooking and personal hygiene. Remember to plan for pets.

### First Aid Kit:

In any emergency, you or a family member may be cut, burned or suffer other injuries. Keep basic first aid supplies so you are prepared to help when someone is hurt.

Full warden messages are available on our website: <http://dhaka.usembassy.gov/msg.html>

